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A12
7/29/03

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Re: Application Number 09/866,652
Art Unit: 3624
Examiner: Charles R. Kyle

15 July 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

Following please find the below described materials related to the above identified application for U.S. Utility Patent:

1. Letter of Transmittal (this sheet) and Certificate of Mailing on: 2 sheets;
2. 'Response to Third Office Action' on: 29 sheets;

Total: 31 sheets.

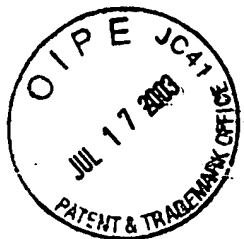
Please file the above described materials following in the above identified application for U.S. Utility Patent.

Thank you kindly for your service.

Respectfully yours,

Peter O'Donovan Gibson, Reg. #34,605

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Telephone: 410/358-5912
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

Re: Application Number 09/866,652

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I, Peter Gibson, Registration Number 34,605, do hereby certify with my dated signature below that the above described materials are being deposited with the United States Postal Service in an envelope addressed to: 'Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 today, July 15th 2003, bearing sufficient postage for First Class Mail.

Peter Gibson, Reg. #34,605

Peter Gibson, Reg. #34,605

July 15th 2003

July 15th 2003



Application No. 09/866,652
Applicant: Tommaso Innocenti

Art Unit: 3624

Examiner: Charles R. Kyle
Filed: May 30th 2001

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

A. Acknowledgment of Action

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's: recitation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as the "basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action"; Examiner's rejection of claims 40 - 76 under the same "as being unpatentable over *Auction This* and *Wurman* in view of *Forage Buy-Sell Contracts* by Palmer; and: "Regarding Claim 40, *Auction This* discloses the invention substantially as claimed, including in a business method intended to facilitate flexible terms commodities trading the steps of:

a) Providing, upon a web site accessible upon the world wide web (pages 79-81), a proposal format (page 125, second paragraph) in which the particular commodity, quantity, price, and specific commodity category dependent quality characteristics desired by a prospective buyer in completion of a submission for initiating an open bid (page 21, 'Bidders Can Be Choosers; pages 64 and 85);

b) Providing, upon a web site accessible upon the world wide web (pages 79-81), a proposal format (page 125, second paragraph) in which the commodity, quantity, price, and quality offered by a prospective seller in completion of a submission for initiating an open offer (page 23, 'Sellers Find their Market; pages 64 and 85);

c) Posting upon said web site a listing for a specified lot of commodity in accordance with a completed proposal submission (page 124, Fig. 7-4) detailing a plurality of terms including but not restricted to delivery and payment (page 124, Fig. 7-4) comprising an open offer of said specified lot when initiated by a prospective seller;

d) Indicating upon said web site, in association with said listing, the matching in all said terms between any offer and any bid both concerned with said specified lot (page 213). (3rd Office action, pages 2 - 3)

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1 2. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's admission that "*Auction This* does
2 not specifically disclose that the type of auction can be specified or that the auction is two-
3 way (sellers and buyers making proposals)." (3rd Office action, page 3)
4

5 3. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement, immediately following
6 and regarding the admission acknowledged above in paragraph 2, that: "*Wurman* discloses
7 these features at page 2, first full paragraph and page 3, second full paragraph respectively."
8 (3rd Office action, page 3)
9

10 4. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following
11 the statement acknowledged above in paragraph 3, that:

12 It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the
13 invention to have allowed auction-type specification as disclosed by *Wurman*
14 in the auctions disclosed by *Auction This* because this would have provided a
15 means to very specifically describe the proposed auction of *Auction This* in
16 terms of the options described in *Wurman* at page 2, second full paragraph. (3rd
17 Office action, page 3)
18
19

20
21 5. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's expression of hindsight clearly
22 derived from the present disclosure, immediately following the allegation acknowledged
23 above in paragraph 4, that: "Further, it would have been obvious to have executed the
24 commodity auction disclosed by *Auction This* using the two-way auction format disclosed
25 by *Wurman* because this would have been a format suitable for the exchange of
26 commodities." (3rd Office action, pages 3 - 4)

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1 6. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement, immediately following
2 the expression of hindsight acknowledged above in paragraph 5, that: "Further, the
3 compatibility of *Auction This* and *Wurman* is indicated by cites at page 121-122 and page
4 2, first full paragraph respectively." (3rd Office action, page 4)

5
6 7. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following
7 the statement acknowledged above in paragraph 6, that: "As to the limitations of counter-bids
8 and response to counter-bids, these were well known negotiating techniques within auctions
9 and are suggested by *Wurman* at page 2, second full paragraph." (3rd Office action, page 4)

10
11 8. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's redundant assertion, immediately
12 following the allegation acknowledged above in paragraph 7, that: "*Auction This* and
13 *Wurman* disclose the invention substantially as claimed. See the discussion above." (3rd
14 Office action, page 4)

15
16 9. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's admission, immediately following
17 and with regard to the statements recited above in paragraph 8, that: "They do not
18 specifically disclose providing samples of a commodity by a seller." (3rd Office action, page
19 4)

20
21 10. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following
22 and with regard to the admission recited above in paragraph 9, that: "*Palmer* discloses this
23 feature at page 8." (3rd Office action, page 4)

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

11. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following the allegation recited above in paragraph 10, that:

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention for the seller to provide samples of auction commodities as disclosed by *Palmer* in the auction combination of *Auction This* and *Wurman* because this would have allowed bidders and seller to adjust commodity pricing to reflect quality as specifically taught by *Palmer* at page 8. See also page 2, first paragraph and pages 5-8. (3rd Office action, page 4)

12. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement, immediately following the allegation recited above in paragraph 11 and with regard to the same, that: "Applicant has provided no argument as to why this reasoning is incorrect." (3rd Office action, page 4)

13. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following the statement recited above in paragraph 12, that: "Palmer also discloses importance of weight to commodity trading throughout the document." (3rd Office action, page 4)

14. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's speculation, immediately following the allegation recited above in paragraph 13, that: "Further, consider that similar considerations would apply for the buyer supplied commodity model in a two-way auction. In this case the buyer would have provided a model as a demonstrator of quality sought rather than provided as with a seller." (3rd Office action, page 4)

continued

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 15. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's allegation, immediately following
2 the speculation recited above in paragraph 14 and apparently with regard to the same, that:
3 "Provision of such models is old and well-known." (3rd Office action, page 4)
4

5 16. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's extraneous comments, immediately
6 following the allegation recited above in paragraph 15 and apparently with regard to the
7 same, that: "An example of such a model is the arsenal model supplied by the War
8 Department to specify the form and quality of military goods to be supplied to the
9 government. Such models were in use in the nineteenth century." (3rd Office action, page 4)
10

11 17. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's expression of confusion,
12 immediately following the extraneous comments recited above in paragraph 16, that:

13 Further, the reason for the addition of the model and sample limitations
14 to an independent claim is unclear. The limitations do not contain a recitation
15 of providing samples/models; rather they optionally provide such provision.
16 Additionally, the optional provision does not relate to the rest of the claim
17 language. No use of the quality indications is made in the execution of the
18 auction. An inventive feature such as bid calculation based on indicated
19 quality would perhaps relate these limitations to the rest of the Claim. (3rd
20 Office action, page 5)
21
22
23

24 18. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's support of rejection of claims 41 -
25 70 found on pages 5 - 8 of the third Office action.
26

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

Response to Arguments

19. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement indicating that the "arguments filed" by the present applicant "have been fully considered but (said arguments) are not persuasive". (3rd Office action, page 8)

20. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's note "that the previous rejection of Claims 41 - 76 ... is unchallenged" and that "Examiner assumes that Applicant concurs with the treatment of these Claim *elements* (emphasis added)". (3rd Office action, page 8)

21. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement that: "the issue of model and sample provision were addressed in the prior (O)ffice action in the treatment of Claims 33 and 26 and that: "Contrary to Applicant's implication, Claim 26 was treated at page 8 of the prior (O)ffice action." (3rd Office action, page 8)

22. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement that: "Models and samples, as effective descriptions of goods desired or provided are seen as equivalent." and "In any case, the issue is further treated in the rejection of Claim 40 above." because: "in the example above, the arsenal shows what is desired; a sample shows what is available. The two features are merely ways for seller and buyer to assure understanding of quality for the transaction." (3rd Office action, pages 8 - 9)

23. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statements immediately following the above cited statement in response to Applicant's arguments:

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 Thirdly, as noted in the last paragraph of the treatment of Claim 40
2 above, there is not even a recitation that models or samples are provided.
3 Rather, the language reads on merely providing an option to do so. This reads
4 on a check box indicating that user will supply a sample or model, not that the
5 provision is done. A clear statement that the provision is done and that the
6 model or sample is used for some purpose would at least relate the option
7 selection to the rest of the Claim.

8 No such use appears to be done. A review of the Specification shows
9 repeated use of the words 'model' and sample, (e.g. Table 3). However no
10 particular use is made of the concepts. At page 7 of the prior (O)ffice action,
11 the Examiner suggested that quality considerations could be used to adjust
12 commodity pricing to reflect such considerations. This reasoning is
13 unchallenged; Applicant discloses no particular use for his model/samples,
14 only that (these) might be provided. (3rd Office action, page 9)
15

16
17 24. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's comments and statements regarding
18 sections B.2, B.4, B. 5, B.6 of Applicant's arguments presented in the last Response on pages
19 9 - 10 of the third Office action.

20
21 25. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's reply "(i)n response to applicant's
22 argument at B.6 through B.11 that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon
23 improper hindsight reasoning" because "any judgement on obviousness is *in a sense*
24 (emphasis added) necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning" (3rd Office
25 action, page 10) supported by citation of a thirty-two year old Court of Customs and Patent
26 Appeals decision. (3rd Office action, page 10)
27
28

continued

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 26. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statements that: "At B.12, Examiner
2 made clear that models and samples are equivalent. Disclosure of the prior art of samples
3 would have suggested models to one of ordinary skill in the art of commodities auctions as
4 set forth above. This was addressed at page 8, first paragraph 1 of the prior (O)ffice action.
5 (3rd Office action, page 10)

6
7 27. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statements that: "At B.13, Applicant
8 fails to provide any substantive argument or evidence that model provision was unknown.
9 This is merely implied. See also the discussion of Claim 40. (3rd Office action, page 10)

10
11 28. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statements that: "At B.14, Applicant
12 restates arguments addressed above. Had the model/sample features conferred patentability,
13 the Examiner would have indicated such in the prior (O)ffice action." (3rd Office action, page
14 10)

15
16 29. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's statement that: "At C.17, Summary,
17 Applicant restates arguments addressed above." (3rd Office action, page 10)

18
19 ***Conclusion***

20 30. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's direction of inquiry to Charles Kyle
21 and provision of telephone numbers for: the same; his supervisor; fax phone numbers, for
22 "regular" and "After Final communications"; and reception.
23

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

Interview Summary

31. Applicant respectfully acknowledges Examiner's summary of the telephonic interview held between Applicant's representative and Examiner in January Of this year:

Palmer was cited by Examiner as showing weight and specific commodity category dependent quality characteristics. Applicant asked if incorporation of 26 and/or 33 into Claim 1. As already rejected, answer was no. Applicant argues that model from buyer is different from sample from seller. (3rd Office action, page 12)

B. Submission of Evidence Overcoming Grounds of Rejection

Prefatory Comments

1. Applicant respectfully wishes to preface what the current Examiner terms 'arguments' or 'remarks' with a comment regarding the use of terms above such as 'allegation', 'speculation', 'redundant assertion', and 'expression of hindsight': these terms are in no manner intended to convey the slightest discourtesy or disrespect for the present Examiner who is obviously possessed of tremendous intelligence, talent, and industry; these terms are, rather, used to assist the Director and/or the Board of Appeals in review of the present prosecution in consequence, respectively, to a petition invoking supervisory authority and/or appeal in ascertainment of the matters that the present Applicant's representative views as indicative of the patently illegal methods by which Internet business methods are, and have been for the last several years, obstinately opposed by the Patent Office which action is, further, understood to be the result of a political directive of the current administration, in retaliation for the excesses of the previous, as well as a natural reaction against being told that business methods more generally are patentable by the Court of Appeals for the Federal

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1 Circuit in *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc.*, 149 F.3d 1368,
2 1373, 47 USPQ2d 1596, 1600 (1998) as long as a computer is utilized to facilitate the
3 method; and, it is further commented, Applicant's representative is most appreciative of the
4 opportunity to develop and expand his capabilities in patent practice afforded by the current
5 political situation and such able Office staff; thank you most kindly, sincerely, and
6 courteously; it is also commented, strictly by Applicant's representative, that the burden
7 imposed by the political imperatives upon the men and women of Art Units 3624 and 3625,
8 to sensibility of the present Applicant's representative, is appreciated as being so great as to
9 test the continued impeccable reputation of the Office itself.

10
11 ***Errors In Rejection Under § 103***

12 1. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging that *Auction This*
13 discloses the invention substantially as claimed because:

14 a. Page 125, second paragraph:

15
16 Bidding at eBay is a two-step process: first, you enter the dollar amount you
17 want to bid. Your bid has to beat the current high bid by at least the minimum
18 bid increment, and it could be a maximum bid that you'd ever be willing to
19 pay. Plug in that number where eBay prompts you to, and click on the *Review*
20 *bid* button at the bottom of the screen. The second step-and the second screen-
21 is where you'll enter your eBay user ID and your password. When you've
22 done that and you want to place your bid, click on the *Place bid* button. Ebay
23 will zip off and tally your maximum bid amount against any other bidders
24 who've been bidding (or against a seller's reserve price, or both) and will
25 respond with a screen that tells you how you did. If you're lucky, e Bay will
26 show that you are now the high bidder. Congratulations!
27

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1 does not disclose, mention, or suggest: "a proposal format in which the particular
2 commodity" or "specific commodity dependent quality characteristics desired by a
3 prospective buyer in completion of a submission for initiating an open bid" and while
4 pages 64 and 85 are further cited, without even a specific paragraph referenced, in
5 support of this allegation page 64, copy included in Appendix hereto, discusses Dutch
6 and reserve price auctions without any mention or suggestion of a commodity or
7 commodity dependent quality characteristics and page 85, upon which Figure 6-5,
8 'Place / Raise Your Bid', resides, lists the following options, under 'Step 1: Enter
9 Your Bid Information', for specification by a prospective buyer: 'Bid Price per Unit',
10 'Quantity', and 'Remarks' while Step 2 facilitates selection of shipping method.

- 11 b. Page 125, second paragraph, see above, does not provide "a proposal format in which
12 the commodity" or the "quality" offered by a prospective seller in completion of a
13 submission for initiating an open offer neither does page 64, the 'proposal format'
14 shown on page 85 is for use by a prospective bidder only, not a prospective seller, and
15 page 23 has none of these claimed restrictions or limitations either:

16
17 Figure 2-1

18 My most peculiar purchase this year. The Japan-only 'Phantom of the
19 Paradise action figure. A distant cousin to the Ken doll, and a twisted
20 reminder of the kooky things you can find at an auction.

21
22 A final point to be made about the online auctions is that you can find just
23 about anything conceivable out there (see Figure 2-1). If you need some
24 hardware to beef up your home PC, you'll find it. If you're looking for a cool
25 deal on sporting goods, you'll find it. If you've lost some trinket from your
26 past that has left a nostalgic hole in your existence, you'll (usually) find it.
27 And if you're just looking for something odd or entertaining to satisfy your

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 whimsical nature, you'll find *a whole lot* of that.

2
3 Sellers Find Their Market

4 Now sellers aren't all slime, and they don't have to resort to bootlicking to
5 make the online auctions work for them. In fact, sellers will often find
6 incredible prosperity in the virtual auction parlor simply due to the fact that
7 there are millions of ready-and-willing bidders out there waiting for the next
8 item to hit the block.
9

10 c. Page 124, Fig. 7-4, showing an eBay listing for a "vintage Yellow Submarine movie
11 poster", according to the legend for the same, actually a "YELLOW SUBMARINE,
12 orig movie window card", "Item #158190319" is clearly unconcerned and fails to
13 disclose, mention, or suggest "a specified lot of commodity" as alleged by Examiner
14 and it does not, as alleged by Examiner in a previous Office action, indicate
15 commodity quality or even quality at all: "orig" means original, obviously, which
16 simply identifies the item; whether the 'card' is torn, faded, in poor or excellent
17 condition is not even indicated nor is there opportunity, i.e. a field available, for such
18 indication in marked contrast to the presently claimed invention inclusive of "a listing
19 for a specified lot of commodity;

20 d. there is no choice on the part of the buyer with regard to delivery terms in *Auction*
21 *This*, as made abundantly clear in Figure 6-5 discussed above while the sole page
22 cited by Examiner in support of "matching in all said terms between offer and any
23 bid" clearly has the software providing the web site match no terms at all as the
24 highest price wins and then the e-mail addresses of buyer and seller are provided: "In
25 the person-to-person scenario, the end-of -auction e-mail message notifies buyer and
26 seller of the final bid price and provides each party with the other's e-mail address so

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 they can finish the deal.”

2
3 2. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging that *Auction This*
4 discloses the invention substantially as claimed because, by Examiner’s own admission,
5 “*Auction This* does not specifically disclose that the type of auction can be specified or that
6 the auction is two-way (sellers and buyers making proposals).” (3rd Office action, page 3)

7
8 3. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in stating that “*Wurman*
9 discloses these features (two-way auction with sellers and buyers making proposals) because
10 *Wurman* does not suggest these ‘techniques’ as set forth in the first Applicant’s Response:

11
12 3. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner’s statement, after
13 admission that *Auction This* does not “disclose that the type of auction can be
14 specified or that the auction is two-way”, that: “*Wurman* discloses these
15 features at page 2, first full paragraph and page 3, second paragraph
16 respectively” (FOA page four, lines 1 - 4) is in error with regard to disclosure
17 of a ‘two-way’ auction as presently claimed and that said error is
18 demonstrated with recitation of the pertinent passage cited and recognition of
19 the novel capabilities regarding ‘two-way’ auction operation provided by the
20 language of present base claim 1 as being neither disclosed nor suggested by
21 *Wurman*:

22
23 The *continuous double auction* (CDA), matches buyers and
24 sellers immediately on detection of compatible bids. A periodic
25 version of the double auction (sometimes termed a *call market*
26 [12] or *clearinghouse*) instead collects bids over a specified
27 interval of time, then *clears* the market at the expiration of the
28 bidding interval.²

29
30 ² We refer to these double auctions as *periodic* to contrast them

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1 with the CDA, in which clears are triggered by the reception of
2 new bids. Despite the name, the class of periodic double
3 auctions includes those with aperiodic clear policies, such as
4 those triggered by elapsed periods of inactivity, a randomly
5 generated schedule, or some predefined clearing schedule. (Page
6 3, second full paragraph, and footnote)
7

8 wherein the 'continuous double auction' is seen to comprise an automatic
9 matching of compatible bids and offers operating to clear, as opposed to
10 clearing after an elapsed time, which does describe a dependent feature of the
11 presently claimed invention expressed in claim 2 wherein depositing of the
12 listing follows "matching in all said terms between any offer and any bid both
13 concerned with said specified lot" but which most emphatically does not
14 describe or suggest in any manner the 'two-way' auction method claimed by
15 present claim 1 including the sixth step (f):
16

17 posting upon said web site, in association with said listing, any
18 offer indications by said prospective seller in response to posted
19 counter bids and any bid indications by said prospective buyer
20 in response to posted counter offers signifying a modification of
21 at least one term in said listing (Claim 1, lines 19 - 21);
22

23 because, quite simply, neither *Wurman* nor any other reference cited by
24 Examiner or known in the pertinent prior art allows modification of terms in
25 a listing in an auction in response to counter bids or counter offers which
26 capability is hence considered to patentably distinguish the presently claimed
27 invention over all of said prior art and comprise both a limitation wholly
28 beyond the ability of the prior art to suggest and a patentable novelty in view
29 of the state of the prior art cited.
30

31
32 continued

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1 4. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging that:

2
3 It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the
4 invention to have allowed auction-type specification as disclosed by *Wurman*
5 in the auctions disclosed by *Auction This* because this would have provided a
6 means to very specifically describe the proposed auction of *Auction This* in
7 terms of the options described in *Wurman* at page 2, second full paragraph. (3rd
8 Office action, page 3)
9

10 as demonstrated by the reasoning given for the allegation: the “proposed auction”, singular,
11 “of *Auction This*”, i.e. eBay, doesn’t admit specification of auction type and the fact that
12 *Auction This* discusses Dutch and regular auction types doesn’t mean that anyone was
13 suggesting specification of auction type for an on-line auction.
14

15 5. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in considering the expression
16 of hindsight clearly derived from the present disclosure: “Further, it would have been
17 obvious to have executed the commodity auction disclosed by *Auction This* using the two-
18 way auction format disclosed by *Wurman* because this would have been a format suitable
19 for the exchange of commodities.” is a proper use of reconstructive hindsight because, for
20 one, reconstructive hindsight is improper, as demonstrated by the citations from the Court
21 of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in the first and second Applicant’s Responses which all
22 supercede the 32 year old decision of the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals cited by
23 Examiner and for two, since there is no mention of commodities anywhere in the cited prior
24 art, the suggestion cannot be in the prior art as required by all modern case law and for three
25 since the cited prior art doesn’t mention commodities even by the outdated CCPA decision
26 the reconstruction constitutes an improper use of hindsight.

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1 6. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in stating that "the
2 compatibility of *Auction This* and *Wurman* is indicated by cites at page 121-122 and page
3 2, first full paragraph respectively" as demonstrated by a reading of these pages and further
4 indicated by the failure of Examiner to provide any clue as to how material found in these
5 'cites' performs the desired function: in this case 'compatibility'.
6

7 7. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging counter bids and
8 responses to counter bids to be "suggested by *Wurman* at page 2, second full paragraph" as
9 set forth in response to the first Office action and, again, readily demonstrated by a recital
10 of the same:
11

12 A user can configure the AuctionBot to administer a variety of auction types,
13 by setting parameters controlling the bidding protocol and auction rules. An
14 auction description specifies such attributes as the number and frequency of
15 market-clearing events, restrictions on bidding, revelation of intermediate
16 information, and the policies for determining prices and matching buyers and
17 sellers. Options currently offered in the AuctionBot cover most of the auction
18 traditional types described in the literature, and we continue to extend the
19 system to support a widening variety of auction protocols. (*Wurman*, page 2,
20 par. 2)
21

22
23 8. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that the
24 redundant assertion: "*Auction This* and *Wurman* disclose the invention substantially as
25 claimed. See the discussion above." provides any support whatsoever in rejection.
26
27

continued

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 9. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that the
2 admission: "They (the references cited in rejection) do not specifically disclose providing
3 samples of a commodity by a seller", (3rd Office action, page 4), is less than fatal to the
4 rejection of present claim 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103.

5
6 10. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging that "*Palmer*
7 discloses this feature (providing samples of a commodity by a seller) at page 8", (3rd Office
8 action, page 4), as demonstrated by recital of the pertinent paragraphs:

9
10 If a situation exists where the grower will also do the harvesting, it is the
11 grower's responsibility to deliver a quality product. In this case, price
12 discounts are established when whole plant moisture falls outside of an
13 acceptable range.

14
15 Accurate moisture estimates must be made throughout the harvest process and
16 should be done on a field by field basis. Samples can be taken and sent to any
17 accredited forage-testing laboratory or done by the individuals using a gram
18 scale and a microwave oven. Taking multiple samples on a field by field basis
19 to insure an accurate estimate is very important.
20

21 wherein it is clearly seen that the samples taken are being provided by a "grower" of corn
22 "throughout the harvest process", not a prospective seller at auction, to a laboratory for
23 moisture content determination, something that the grower can also perform themselves.

24
25 11. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in alleging that it would have
26 been obvious to combine the sample teaching of *Palmer* at page 8 with *Wurman* and *Auction*
27 *This* because the sample concerned is taken by a grower, not a prospective seller in an

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1 auction: *Palmer* describes *Forage Buy-Sell Contracts*, not auctions:

2
3 Contractual arrangements between crop farmers and dairymen to supply all or
4 part of the dairy's forage needs are increasing as dairy farms expand, because
5 concurrent expansion of crop acres and cow numbers is not feasible. Without
6 such agreements, additional land would need to be rented or purchased. This
7 would require increased capital, input expenses and demands on time and
8 labor for producing crops. Long-term agreements can help solve this concern,
9 plus they can provide a consistent market for the croppers roduct and a
10 guaranteed supply of quality forage to the dairy, at a price that insures long
11 term profitability to each party. (*FORAGE BUY-SELL CONTRACTS*, page 1,
12 second paragraph)
13

14 and most certainly does not contain any suggestion regarding an auction conducted on the
15 Internet which is necessary for inclusion of this reference within the scope of the prior art
16 pertinent to examination of the present application.

17
18 12. Applicant respectfully submits that the above 'argument' provides ample proof as to
19 "why this reasoning is incorrect", (3rd Office action, page 4), and Examiner in error upon this
20 point.

21
22 13. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is correct with regard to the emphasis
23 *Palmer* places upon weight in a forage commodity, e.g. corn, hay, but is in error in alleging
24 that he mentions commodity trading as *Palmer* is solely concerned with a long term
25 contractual agreement between 'growers' of forage and a dairy farm without any auction
26 whatsoever.
27

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1 14. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to consider what is obviously
2 pure speculation or conjecture: "Further, consider that similar considerations would apply
3 for the buyer supplied commodity model in a two-way auction. In this case the buyer would
4 have provided a model as a demonstrator of quality sought rather than provided as with a
5 seller." (3rd Office action, page 4), without any suggestion in the prior art, to be of any value
6 in support of a §103 rejection.

7
8 15. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to suppose that a simple,
9 wholly unsubstantiated allegation: "Provision of such models is old and well-known", (3rd
10 Office action, page 4), provides any support to rejection.

11
12 16. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to equate an "arsenal model
13 supplied by the War Department to specify the form and quality of military goods to be
14 supplied to the government", (3rd Office action, page 4), with the models of the presently
15 claimed invention which are provided by a prospective seller of a particular commodity in
16 an **auction** that is, furthermore, **conducted on the Internet** and hence this point comprises
17 nothing more than an irrelevant and hence extraneous comment on the part of Examiner that
18 is wholly outside a proper scope of the present invention and wholly inadmissible as support
19 of rejection thereof.

20
21 17. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that Applicant
22 will amend to clarify a point that exists only in the imagination of the Examiner: there is no
23 "bid calculation", (3rd Office action, page 5), in the presently claimed invention.

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1 18. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that Applicant
2 will amend to clarify a point that exists only in the imagination of the Examiner as there is
3 no "bid calculation", (3rd Office action, page 5), in the presently claimed invention: there are
4 bids entered by a prospective buyer without any need for calculation of the same; and as
5 regards "indicated quality", (3rd Office action, page 5), first of all it is implicit that the bid
6 reflects the quality 'indicated' but more importantly, the presently claimed invention
7 provides means for the quality of the commodity lot to be positively ascertained, through the
8 provision of a sample by the prospective buyer, and, further, the presently claimed invention
9 as recited in present claim 40, provides means for the prospective buyer to positively specify
10 the quality desired with provision of a model.
11

12 19. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to suppose that a simple
13 statement asserting consideration of the arguments provided by an applicant, without even
14 identification of the arguments much less any detailed discussion of the same, provides any
15 support to a rejection under §103.
16

17 20. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to assume that "Applicant
18 concurs with the treatment of these Claim elements", (3rd Office action, page 8), for two
19 reasons: first, these entities concerned are not claim **elements**, the entities concerned are
20 **claims**, namely current claims 41 - 76; second Applicant does not concur with Examiner with
21 his 'treatment', understood to mean rejection, of these claims: Applicant considers these
22 rejections to most likely be lacking in a proper basis as are all the grounds of rejection of the
23 current base claim but Applicant realizes that claims 41 - 76 are allowable if base claim 40

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1 is allowable because claims 41 - 76 each are properly dependent upon base claim 40 and are
2 hence all allowable if base claim 40 is allowable, regardless of the individual rejections of
3 these dependent claims.
4

5 21. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error to suppose that mere
6 referencing of a previous address of "the issue of model and sample provision", (3rd Office
7 action, page 8), constitutes any contribution to the present examination after Applicant has
8 not only revealed this 'address' to be wholly vacuous but has relied upon the fact that
9 Examiner has provided, through all three Office actions, **no prior art reference disclosing,**
10 **mentioning, or in any manner suggesting, the provision of a model by a prospective**
11 **buyer in a commodity auction, online or otherwise.**
12

13 22. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in stating that: "Models and
14 samples, as effective descriptions of goods desired or provided are seen as equivalent." and
15 "In any case, the issue is further treated in the rejection of Claim 40 above." because: "in the
16 example above, the arsenal shows what is desired; a sample shows what is available. The
17 two features are merely ways for seller and buyer to assure understanding of quality for the
18 transaction." (3rd Office action, pages 8 - 9) because:

- 19 a. models and samples are not equivalent: a model is provided by a prospective buyer,
20 a sample by a prospective seller;
21 b. the statement that: 'In any case, the issue is further treated in the rejection of Claim
22 40 above' is simply hollow and gratuitous, providing no substance to the argument
23 whatsoever;

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- 1 c. the arsenal model is not an auction;
2 d. Examiner has failed to provide an example of a sample offered in auction;
3 e. a 'transaction' is not an auction: it can be the **result** of a lot being bought at auction
4 but not the auction itself and it more commonly can be a simple purchase: in a store,
5 of illegal drugs on a street corner, from a vegetable market, of the favors of a
6 prostitute; and less commonly comprise a bribe given to a government official for
7 favoring a particular company or policy or money given to the Mafia for protection
8 against burglary, et cetera.

9
10 23. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that "a recitation
11 that models or samples are provided", (3rd Office action, page 9), is necessary to comprise
12 a fully proper claim limitation: the ability for a prospective buyer, particularly, to provide
13 a model of a particular commodity in an auction conducted over the Internet comprises a new
14 and useful function hitherto unknown and hence a patentable distinction over the known
15 prior art; Examiner's statement that "no particular use is made of the concepts", (3rd Office
16 action, page 9), is pointless, irrelevant, and gratuitous: the benefit provided by this new
17 function and patentable distinction is obvious: it provides prospective buyers in an online
18 auction with the means of concretely defining exactly what is desired and this is clearly
19 expressed in the present specification as evidenced by Examiner's understanding that a
20 model shows what is desired in a 'transaction' by the buyer.

- 21
22 24. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in:
23 a. stating that the use of the word 'restriction' is unclear as evidenced by Examiner's

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- 1 understanding that this word "appears to mean limitation", (3rd Office action, page 9);
2 b. assuming that a simple, unsupported, allegation: models and samples are considered
3 equivalent; makes it so;
4 requiring Applicant to disprove a negative: "It is unclear why being a bidder would
5 restrict ones ability to provide a model. The prior art of record contains no teaching
6 or suggestion of this", (3rd Office action, page 9), the prior art cannot contain a
7 teaching or suggestion of a restriction to something which did not exist in the prior
8 art: that simply proves Applicant's arguments: the provision of a model by a
9 prospective buyer in an online auction is new: please see MPEP 2112 for guidance
10 on this:

11 EXAMINER MUST PROVIDE RATIONALE OR EVIDENCE 12 TENDING TO SHOW INHERENCY 13 14

15 The fact that a certain result or characteristic may occur or be present
16 in the prior art is not sufficient to establish the inherency of that result or
17 characteristic. ... 'To establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence 'must make
18 clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing
19 described in the reference, and that it would be so recognized by persons of
20 ordinary skill. Inherency, however, may not be established by probabilities or
21 possibilities. The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of
22 circumstances is not sufficient.' *In re Robertson*, 169 F.3d 743, 745, 49
23 USPQ2d 1949, 1950-51 (Fed. Cir. 1999)
24

25 'In relying upon the theory of inherency, the examiner must provide a
26 basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the
27 determination that the allegedly inherent characteristic necessarily flows from
28 the teachings of the applied prior art.' *Ex parte Levy*, 17 USPQ2d 1461, 1464
29 (Bd. At. App. & Inter. 1990) (MPEP 2100-52);

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Applicant also respectfully suggests that Examiner read MPEP 2143 and 2143.01 for guidance regarding the necessity of the prior art providing the suggestion for modification or combination of prior art elements in reconstruction of the claimed invention:

2143 Basic Requirements of a *Prima Facie* Case of Obviousness

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaek*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)

2143.01 Suggestion or Motivation To Modify the References [R-1] THE PRIOR ART MUST SUGGEST THE DESIRABILITY OF THE CLAIMED INVENTION

'There are three possible sources for a motivation to combine references: the nature of the problem to be solved, the teachings of the prior art, and the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art.' *In re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1357, 47 USPQ2d 1453, 1457-58 (Fed. Cir. 1998)

'In determining the propriety of the Patent Office case for obviousness in the first instance, it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the reference teachings would appear to be sufficient for one of ordinary skill in the relevant art having the reference before him to make the proposed substitution, combination or other modification.' *In re Linter*, 458 F.2d 1013, 1016, 173 USPQ 560, 562 (CCPA 1972)

Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

1 teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so *found either explicitly* or
2 implicitly *in the references themselves* (emphasis added) or in the knowledge
3 generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. 'The test for an implicit
4 showing is what the combined teachings, knowledge of one of ordinary skill
5 in the art, and the nature of the problem to be solved as a whole would have
6 suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art.' *In re Kotzab*, 217 F.3d 1365,
7 1370, 55 USPQ2d 1313, 1317 (Fed Cir. 2000) See also > *In re Lee*, 277 F.3d
8 1338, 1342-44, 61 USPQ2d 1430, 1433-34 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (discussing the
9 importance of relying on objective evidence and making specific factual
10 findings with respect to the motivation to combine references; < *In re Fine*, ...
11

12 *In In re Fine ... The examiner and Board asserted that it would have*
13 *been within the skill of the art to substitute one type of detector for another*
14 *in the system of the primary reference, however, the court found there was no*
15 *support or explanation of this conclusion and reversed.* (MPEP 2100-124-5)
16 (emphasis added);
17

18
19 25. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner's reliance upon *In re McLaughlin*
20 (CCPA 1971) to justify reconstruction of the presently claimed invention using at least one
21 element, a model of a particular commodity provided by a prospective buyer in an auction
22 held online, that is wholly lacking from the prior art, is in error as it is always necessary in
23 support of a *prima facie* case to find all the limitations of the claim concerned in the prior
24 art and, moreover, to find the motivation for the combination or modification in the prior art
25 or knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention: since
26 Examiner has not found a model used in a commodities auction in the prior art, nor a sample
27 for that matter, the reconstruction providing these limitations is necessarily taken wholly
28 from the present claimed invention, contrary to *In re McLaughlin* and all other pertinent case
29 law, particularly that superceding the CCPA: the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

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1 26. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in stating that: “models and
2 samples are equivalent” and that disclosure “of the prior art samples would have suggested
3 models to one of ordinary skill in the art of commodities auctions as set forth above” (3rd
4 Office action, page 10) for the reasons set forth above in recitation from the MPEP and case
5 law citations therein: it is insufficient to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness to simply
6 assert, without support or explanation, that one thing is equivalent to another thing;
7 Examiner’s insistence, moreover, that models are the same as samples denies the
8 fundamental element of an auction: that buyers are different from sellers; this argument is
9 wholly without merit, patently absurd, improper, and illegal.

10
11 27. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that Applicant
12 must or could assume the burden of proving that something was unknown in the prior art:
13 “At B13, Applicant fails to provide any substantive argument or evidence that model
14 provision was unknown. This is merely implied. See also the discussion of Claim 40. (3rd
15 Office action, page 10); this is nonsense, improper, and illegal: Examiner has the burden of
16 identifying the prior art or common knowledge from which the claim limitation concerned
17 is either disclosed or suggested.

18
19 28. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that the
20 statement that “Had the model/sample features conferred patentability, the Examiner would
21 have indicated such in the prior (O)ffice action” contributes to the rejections conveyed in the
22 last Office action.

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1 29. Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner is in error in supposing that the
2 statement: "At C.17 Summary, Applicant restates arguments addressed above." (3rd Office
3 action, page 10) comprises any support of rejection conveyed in the last Office action.
4

5 30. Applicant respectfully submits that several significant points in the telephonic
6 interview between the same and Applicant's representative are lacking in Examiner's
7 summary of the same:

- 8 a. "Applicant asked if incorporation of 26 and/or 33 into Claim 1." obviously is lacking
9 the key point here: 'would provide allowance';
- 10 b. "As already rejected, answer was no.", also failing to comprise a sentence, didn't
11 answer the question by Applicant: 'Since claims 26 and 33 contain restrictions
12 unknown to the prior art and lacking support in rejection of the same in the present
13 examination, would incorporation of the restriction of either or both into the base
14 claim provide grounds for allowance?'
- 15 c. "Applicant argues that model from buyer is different from sample from seller." (3rd
16 Office action, page 12) omits Applicant's explanation: 'because, in an auction, the
17 lots for sale by a seller must necessarily exist and hence be available for inspection
18 so a sample of the same could, at least be physically derived from the existing
19 conditions but a model of what is desired by a prospective buyer in an auction is not
20 even physically derivable from existing conditions in any previously known auction.
21
22
23

continued

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

**C. PATENTABLE NOVELTY DISTINGUISHING THE PRESENTLY CLAIMED
INVENTION OVER THE PRIOR ART**

Applicant respectfully submits that, in the language of present claim 1, "providing the option of provision of a model of a particular commodity desired for purposes of indicating the quality desired by a prospective buyer" in an auction conducted online: "providing, upon a web site ... a proposal format in which the type of auction can be specified in addition to the particular commodity ... desired by a prospective buyer in completion of a submission for initiating an open bid" comprises a base claim limitation unknown to the prior art and patentably distinguishing the presently claimed invention over the prior art in accordance with 37 CFR 1.111(b): the specific distinctions believed to render the claims, including any newly presented claims, patentable over any applied references" and that the previous 17 pages, i.e. sections B.1 - B.30 hereof, "distinctly and specifically points out the supposed errors in the examiner's action and (replies) to every ground of objection and rejection in the prior Office action".

D. SUMMARY AND REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

1. Applicant respectfully submits that the present response has been timely filed.
2. Applicant respectfully submits that the present response is complete with regard to statutory and regulatory requirements.

continued

Application No. 09/866,652
Applicant: Tommaso Innocenti

Art Unit: 3624

Examiner: Charles R. Kyle
Filed: May 30th 2001

RESPONSE TO THIRD OFFICE ACTION

3. Applicant respectfully submits that the present response overcomes all grounds of rejection conveyed in the last Office action.

4. Applicant respectfully submits that the last Office action conveyed no objections.

5. Applicant respectfully submits that the present response complies with 37 CFR 1.111(b) and fully and amply demonstrates why the present application for patent deserves allowance.

6. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 41 - 76 are each properly dependent upon base claim 40 and that the grounds of all rejections of said base claim have been overcome herein.

7. Applicant respectfully requests, for all the reasons given above, allowance of present claims 40 - 76.

Respectfully,



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